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ill Allah (sic), could not bring the corpse to the graveyard. It remained therefore, all night in the house (though the people do not like to keep a corpse at night), watched by a multitude of people praying. Next morning also it could not be buried for a long time, the blessed dead compelled the bearers to go through all the streets of the town, till at last, on the recommendations of the governor, the higher officials carried the bier to the grave, even the Turkish soldiers could not accomplish it. The whole town was in uproar. The Mohammadans say the angels exercise this coercive power. The Christians believe it is the devil."

It seems probable, as the author suggests, that we have in these religious festivals in honor of a local celebrity surviving examples of localized and more primitive type of religious cult which has not yet been wholly superseded by the religion of Islam, with its wider outlook and more rational conceptions of life. The notes here recorded suggest at once questions which can only be answered by further investigation and by comparison of the materials gathered in this region with those that are now being brought to light in other fields. It is the purpose of the Harvard African studies to answer these questions, so far as they can be answered by a study of African life.

Interesting from other points of view are the reproductions of the remarkable collection of Benin antiquities at the Peabody Museum, of the celebrated Vai syllabary, and of an interesting poem of 100 lines in the Suaheli language said to have been dictated by a dying mother to her daughter. Transliteration and translation accompany the reproduction in the original script.

ROBERT E. PARK.

Fifty Years and Other Poems. By JAMES WELDON JOHNSON. With an Introduction by BRANDER MATTHEWS. The Cornhill Co., Boston, 1917. Pp. xiv, 92.

From time to time for the last fifteen years Mr. James Weldon Johnson has been remarked as one of the literary men of the race. He has now brought together his verses in a little volume, *Fifty Years and Other Poems*, an introduction to which has been written by Professor Brander Matthews, of Columbia University. The task was eminently worth while.

The book falls into two parts. The first is made up of poems in the commonly accepted forms, though there are one or two

examples of *vers libre*; and the second is entitled *Jingles and Croons*. This second division consists of dialect verses, especially the songs that have been set to music, most frequently by the poet's brother, Mr. J. Rosamond Johnson. Outstanding are the very first lines, *Since you went away*. It is well that these pieces have been brought together. For artistic achievement, however, attention will naturally be fixed upon the first division. *Fifty Years* was written in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the emancipation of the race. Professor Matthews speaks of it as "one of the noblest commemorative poems yet written by any American—a poem sonorous in its diction, vigorous in its workmanship, elevated in its imagination, and sincere in its emotion." This is high praise, and yet it may reasonably be asked if there are not in the book at least four pieces of finer poetic quality. These are, first of all, the two poems that originally appeared in the *Century*, *Mother Night* and *O Black and Unknown Bards*, and *The White Witch* and *The Young Warrior*. The first of these four poems is a sonnet well rounded out. The second gains merit by reason of its strong first and last two stanzas. *The White Witch* chooses a delicate and difficult theme, but contains some very strong stanzas. *The Young Warrior* is a poem of rugged strength and one that deserves all the popularity it has achieved with Mr. Burleigh's musical setting. Mr. Johnson is strongest in the simple, direct, and sometimes sensuous expression that characterizes these latter poems, and it is to be hoped that he may have the time and the inclination to write many more like them.

BENJAMIN BRAWLEY.

Battles and Victories of Allen Allensworth. By CHARLES ALEXANDER. Sherman, French and Company, Boston, 1914. Pp. 429.

Here we have the story of a successful Negro born a slave in Kentucky but who, determined to succeed, rose to the distinction of a teacher and preacher and finally to that of a chaplain in the United States army with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. The value of this book to the historian, however, is not the mere sketch of Colonel Allensworth but the valuable facts bearing on the history of the Negroes in various parts of the United States. The philanthropic attitude of the Quakers toward Negroes, the life of the slave on the Mississippi, the relations between the poor whites and